

VZCZCXYZ0655
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKB #0194/01 0651229
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 051229Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4866
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2675
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0765
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0837
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T BAKU 000194

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/CARC, PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [ENRG](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: INTERIM SECURITY DIALOGUE REVIEW WITH
GOAJ

REF: A. BAKU 129
[1](#)B. 07 BAKU 00422

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Visiting PM/RSAT office director David Bame and OSD Eurasia Policy Director Colonel Jon Chicky met with Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov on February 26 for an interim review of the bilateral security dialogue. Azimov said Kosovo's independence creates a harmful perception of a precedent, which Russia and separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh could manipulate. Azimov remarked that the GOAJ hopes to make a decision on several potential new non-military contributions at or before the Bucharest NATO summit, but indicated that GOAJ officials below cabinet level are not seriously considering any new military contributions at present, nor are they prepared to move forward with a Train and Equip Program (TEP). Azimov asked that at the NATO summit, the U.S. mention the contributions by partners like Azerbaijan; he also repeated FM Mamadyarov's request that the Bucharest Summit Statement include language affirming that conflicts in the Caucasus and Moldova should be resolved on the principle of territorial integrity, building on the language of the Riga Statement.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary continued: Turning to the bilateral action plan from the 2007 security talks, Azimov said the Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for consolidating GOAJ answers to the U.S. questions on Azerbaijan's critical energy infrastructure questions, with Bame noting that the USG is willing to send an assessment team soon. Azimov made a pitch for increased U.S. public displays of support for Azerbaijan, and asked that the U.S. executive branch send the message to the U.S. Congress about Azerbaijan's strong security cooperation. Azimov said a GOAJ interagency group will review the revised draft of the military doctrine in mid-March; he welcomed a U.S. technical review. End Summary.

Kosovo

[1](#)3. (C) Azimov said that, while the U.S. position is that Kosovo's independence is not a precedent, the most important aspect for Azerbaijan is that this creates the perception of a precedent. Azimov expressed concern about how Russia or the separatists in NK might manipulate this perception, particularly as Moscow's reaction is "unpredictable." Azimov observed that NATO's defense of Kosovo separatists was not helpful for Azerbaijan, but Bame countered that the U.S. and

NATO support stability in the Balkans and it was inaccurate to characterize our policy as "support for separatists." Azimov repeated the GOAJ's request, previously made by FM Mammadyarov to the Ambassador, that NATO include in the Bucharest Summit Statement a strong message that conflicts in the Caucasus and Moldova should be resolved on the principle of territorial integrity (ref a), building on the language of the Riga Statement.

NATO Relations & Coalition Contributions

¶4. (C) Azimov said the GOAJ is considering several new non-military contributions for Afghanistan, specifically training for Afghan security officials in Baku, contributions to PRT's led by Turkey or Lithuania, building a girls school, and demining training for Afghan units in Baku. (Azimov previously floated these proposals in an April 2007 meeting with the Ambassador - ref b; the Azerbaijani mission to NATO also floated some of these proposals in January 2008 to USNATO.) Bame thanked Azimov for these ideas and for the January increase of Azerbaijani peacekeepers in Afghanistan from 22 to 45, while noting that the Bucharest Summit will focus on new military contributions to Afghanistan. The Summit provides an opportunity for Azerbaijan to maximize its image as a security contributor. Azimov said he was not in a position to answer, as the Ministry of Defense and Presidential Administration were engaged on this issue. Azimov said President Aliyev will attend the summit, and he hoped the GOAJ's position on the new non-military contributions to the alliance would be in place by then.

¶5. (C) On a possible Train and Equip Program (TEP), Azimov commented that the "authorities may not have been fully aware

of what they were asking for," telling us that the MOD is "unprepared" to commit peacekeeping troops to Afghanistan as would be required for a TEP. Azimov also said he is not engaged in discussions between the Defense Ministry and the Presidential Administration regarding TEP. Azimov suggested that Defense Minister Abiyev likely perceives that committing troops to TEP could denigrate Azerbaijan's military capabilities vis-a-vis Armenia, and that this would not go over well with the general public. Azimov also noted that Azerbaijan would have difficulty committing an entire brigade for peacekeeping operations, given the state of "undeclared war" with Armenia and the heavy turnover in Azerbaijani, conscript-based military.

¶6. (C) Chicky noted that the fiscal environment in Washington has changed since the original bilateral discussions on TEP. It therefore would be helpful for the GOAJ to present a final decision on deploying troops to Afghanistan as a condition for a possible TEP at the upcoming Bilateral Defense Consultations. Azimov closed the topic by noting that the GOAJ is not saying Azerbaijan is not committed to pursuing a TEP, but the GOAJ needs "to further look into this matter." Chicky said the MoD should send any questions it has to the DATT.

¶7. (C) Azimov suggested that the U.S. could do more to highlight publicly Azerbaijan's role as a security contributor, especially with the U.S. Congress. Turning toward the Bucharest Summit, Azimov commented that "something new has to be given for NATO-Azerbaijani relations." He added that "less headaches" could accompany the Azerbaijani approach to NATO and that perhaps the summit could make special mention of partners like Azerbaijan. Bame and Chicky said they would take these and other suggestions back to Washington. (DAO Comment: During recent meetings with Azimov and the Minister of Defense, we have been told that granting Georgia a MAP without also offering one to Azerbaijan would significantly complicate the GOAJ's strategic position, as the GOAJ believes Russia will increase pressure on Azerbaijan.) Azimov also asked for support in convincing Turkey and NATO to remain committed to a project in northwestern Azerbaijan that seeks to remove unexploded ordinance (sagloglu), noting recent indications that Turkey

may not be fully committed to the increasingly challenging project.

¶8. (C) IPAP: Commenting on Azerbaijan's second IPAP, Azimov said NATO's review of the draft in mid-February suggested that, while portions of the draft could be improved, it was something everyone could live with. Azimov said he believes the "silence procedure" is over and the draft is effectively approved by NATO. Bame requested continued GOAJ cooperation with the USG, the NATO IS, and others on the draft in order to help Azerbaijan take maximum advantage of the opportunities it provided for defense reform. Chickey added some specific concerns and highlighted continued DOD interest in continued improvements. Azimov requested Bame's assistance in arranging visits for Azerbaijani experts to NATO headquarters. Azimov also requested U.S. help in sending U.S. and NATO officials to Azerbaijan's semi-annual NATO International School (NISA), particularly because the MFA wants to include GOAJ officials in this forum. The next NISA session will be June 23-28. Azimov said he also would like to expand NISAs activities, to include trainings for GOAJ officials. (NISA is an NGO supported by the MFA, it is not a NATO entity.) Bame undertook to talk to USNATO and relevant offices in Washington to continue working to improve GOAJ relations with NATO.

Military Doctrine

¶9. (C) Bame introduced Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Freier, U.S. Army War College strategist who had traveled to Azerbaijan at the request of the GOAJ, and asked that the GOAJ provide an English-language copy of the draft national military doctrine. Azimov explained that the GOAJ only possesses an Azerbaijani language version, which currently is with several Azerbaijani ministries, who need to provide additional input. The interagency group overseeing the doctrine expects to meet in mid-March and review requested input from the relevant GOAJ entities. Azimov said he would welcome Freier's assistance in the mid-March timeframe after

the input was received. Azimov told the Embassy on February 28 that the MFA would send us a copy of the Military Doctrine soon.

CEIP

¶10. (C) Bame told Azimov that a U.S. interagency group had approved including Azerbaijan in a broader forum to help select countries bolster their critical energy infrastructure vulnerabilities. Bame noted that the Embassy would work with the MFA to plan for a U.S. expert team to conduct a security assessment. Bame requested expedited answers from the GOAJ on the US expert-level questions that had been provided months ago; Azimov said the Cabinet of Ministers is assembling the various GOAJ entities' responses.

PKK and CT

¶11. (S/NF) Azimov noted his interest in the PKK, referencing recent local media reports that the PKK is increasing its presence in NK and the occupied territories. (NOTE: The Embassy has no information to corroborate the press reports, and has asked the GOAJ to supply any concrete evidence, most recently during S/CT Urbancic's visit, septel. GRPO is following up with the MNS.) Azimov said he had no information to confirm recent press reports, but he noted there was a "high probability" of some PKK-Armenian cooperation. Bame reiterated the U.S. position that the U.S. has no information to confirm such media reports, and the U.S. would welcome more detailed information from the GOAJ because the U.S. takes the PKK problem seriously.

Iran

¶12. (C) Asked to comment on Iran, Azimov said the GOAJ prefers evolutionary over revolutionary changes inside Iran. Azimov said that while some believe President Ahmadinejad could be sidelined, there is little that outside actors can do to change Iran's basic foreign policy goal of playing a large regional role.

Working-Level Interagency Meeting

¶13. (C) On February 26, Bame and Chicky met with working-level representatives from the State Border Service, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Special State Protection Service, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of National Security, and the State Customs Committee to review progress on action items from the July 2007 security dialogue. The Customs representative said Customs was unwilling to accept the proposal for a U.S. technical advisor because it violated Azerbaijan's domestic law. Bame noted that USG analysis suggests there is no conflict with domestic law, and said the Embassy would follow up with this issue. Bame raised the importance of Azerbaijan moving to pass counter terrorist financing/anti-money laundering legislation. In response to Chicky's question as to whether the MOD is establishing a strategic planning department, the MOD representative said the MOD will create a J5 office, but provided little detail.

Comment

¶14. (C) The visit demonstrated to the GOAJ that the U.S. is serious about transforming the security dialogue into a results-oriented forum. Azimov is making progress in pulling together the inter-agency process that is required for a more cohesive GOAJ approach to the security relationship, but these interim talks demonstrated that much work remains to be done. Approximately one hour before Bame's meetings began, the MFA informed the Embassy that it could not host the interagency meeting, which was supposed to include GOAJ deputy ministers, because of an unexpected construction problem at the MFA building. The Embassy hosted the interagency meeting and the GOAJ level of representation was downgraded to office directors. We believe that continued USG engagement -- particularly on specific items in the action plan -- will help strengthen the GOAJ's nascent

interministerial and national security process, which in turn will further increase the GOAJ's ability to deliver on security issues of concern to us.

¶15. (U) Bame and Colonel Chicky have cleared on this cable.
DERSE